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Though the horse was not a primary source of food, stories and case histories reveal that horse meat was eaten on occasion and relished. In food-getting Comanche culture was basically a buffalo culture. [262]

As a beast of burden and as a means of personal transportation the horse had a fundamental value to the Comanche. In this respect the horse was a [492] capital good. But the single individual could not effectively utilize more than a dozen horses in his personal string for use in war and hunting.

Beyond this, horses were exceedingly acceptable as gifts and tokens of 431 esteem. As gifts given in reciprocity for services rendered and as fees to 422 medicine men, they served as an informal medium of exchange. As objects demandable in settlement of damage suits at law, they were a tangible form of material wealth endowed with legal and monetary significance.

In spite of all this, the great value of horses to the Comanche was a [554] fiduciary value of inflated worth as prestige tokens, a value rooted in socio-psychological rather than economic factors.

Though captured Mexican youths and children purchased from poverty- 233 stricken Shoshone Indians served as herdsmen, and the increase of herds 556 through selective breeding was practiced by the Comanches, the basic fac- [567] tor in the acquisition and retaining of a large herd was the military skill of the owners. Thus it is that the possession of horses figured in the prestige competition which so constantly and vigorously activated the life of the Comanche male.

The size of Comanche herds was immense. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Upon the count of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Antelope band alone surrendered one thousand five hundred horses to the United States at the time of the capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[17] A single Comanche, Big Fall By Tripping, is reputed among the Indians to have owned more than a thousand horses at one time.

The great communal hunts of the buffalo occurred during the summer 224 months after the seasonal moulting was done and hides were in their prime. This was the season for the in-gathering of the bands. Sporadic and uncontrolled hunting of buffalo occurred whenever they were available during other seasons.

The time of the hunt was determined in democratic assembly at which everybody was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders took the important part. The date for departure being set, the young and able-bodied men with their women left the main camp. Children and old persons remained behind. The expedition travelled light, taking very small and undecorated tipis and what weapons and tools were necessary.

[17] Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Annual Report, Washington, 1875), p. 273.

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●224 The hunt was orderly and cooperative. By custom each person was expected to follow the rules of the game, and no marshals or soldier-police governed the procedure or exercised any administrative control whatever. Just how leadership of the hunt was managed was not uncovered. That there was a leader is certain. Presumably, one of the war leaders with special hunting skill was the man who directed the manoeuvering of the band and supervised the scouts. Whether he was appointed to the directing position or merely assumed it by common consent cannot be said.

First the herd was located by scouts. Then the entire band of hunters stalked it, coming up against the wind. When within striking distance all the men lined up "to get an even start," and then all charged the animals. The main function of the simultaneous charge was to prevent the scattering of the herds by a few individuals, but equally important was the need to kill as many buffalo as quickly as possible so that they would not get overheated in long running. Their meat would then spoil before it could be cured.

Each buffalo was butchered by the women of the man who had slain it and belonged to the man who killed it, identification being made by means of characteristic markings on the arrows.

105 The Comanches cultivated no plants but obtained a certain amount of corn and most of their tobacco in trade with the Mexicans of the Southwest. The tacit non-interference of these same colonial Spaniards in New Mexico made it possible for the Comanche, with the Kiowa, to obtain quantities of these goods and other articles as booty in raids upon the Mexican settlements further south. From the Kiowa and Wichita, also, corn was obtained. Seeds and berries were also utilized.

The material culture of the Comanches was relatively meagre and was of the general Plains type. Families lived in buffalo hide tipis of the twenty-two pole variety laid upon a four-pole foundation, but they were also accustomed to build small brush arbors as wind and sun screens. Somewhat enlarged, these arbors serve as customary summer homes for practically all Comanche families at the present time. Various tools of stone and bone were used in their industries and as weapons of war. The war club, spear and bow and arrow served as offensive armament, while defensive armor for the horse was made of tough raw-hide plates covered with pitch-cemented sand.[18] Many warriors carried the round buffalo-hide medicine shield as well as quivers and bow coverings. Saddles, a modified Spanish type, were made by men for their own use, though in later times Mexican captives

[18] From the traditional Ponca account of the first meeting and early fights with the Comanche from whom the Ponca obtained their first horses. Cf., Fletcher and LaFleche, *The Omaha Tribe* (Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, vol. 27, 1906), pp. 79–80.

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In a variant of this legend given by Eagle Tail Feather the plot structure is identical, but the scene is laid in an Arapaho camp where "the Arapaho medicine man, who was hated by his people, lived alone with his wife to the east of the camp." In the case of the Cheyenne as presented in the version given above we have clearly a reading of Comanche attitudes into the case as Cheyenne attributes. The Cheyennes, so far as field study could determine it, did not possess the sorcery complex.

To sum up sorcery as a crime: Expressed attitudes and the instances cited indicate that sorcery was a socially disruptive power, looked upon with social disapproval. Isolated instances of sorcery were handled as offenses against individuals, though there was no single established social machinery for the need. The diffuse sanctions intrinsic in all social relations were always pressing upon the person who used his medicine powers for bad ends. Such a person was dangerous and social intercourse was withdrawn, eventually leading to overt ostracism and a kind of imposed segregation of the pariah on the edge of the camp. (This segregation seems to have been self-assumed in that there does not appear to be any evidence that the sorcerer was told by anyone that he had better move out. We take it that he was simply frozen out.) Some possessors of medicine powers were compelled by that very power to use it on other people to protect themselves from the ravages of that power. Such excessive and indiscriminate use of power became a social menace not to be tolerated and the result was on occasion a deliberate formation of a social policy to meet the situation. People decided that such a person must die and then laid out a plan as to how the execution could be effected. This was done through the medium of a seemingly dispassionate execution through delegates.

The scarcity of cases of this sort leads to two alternative conclusions: either (a), there was not much use of sorcery attributed cumulatively to individuals; or (b), the accumulated irritation against the users of black magic did not often reach the point where it precipitated direct action on the part of the band. This would reflect either the lack of geared machinery for moving society against public offenders or that the Comanche failed to get obsessive about sorcerers.[2]

INDIVIDUAL ACTION DURING THE COMMUNAL HUNT

In approaching consideration of the rules of the communal buffalo hunt, we might look with expectancy towards something more definite. For it is at this point that the tendency to evolve a definite political expression of

[2] Professor Ruth Benedict observes, "Sorcery is a fear-projection, and the Comanches were not ridden by fear."

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social authority emerged most clearly amongst the Plains tribes. "Indeed," Professor Lowie has written, "disobedience to their (the soldier-constabulary) orders on that occasion and consequent imperilment of the food supply may be regarded as the one crime against society recognized by all the Plains tribes."[3]

The Comanches are the great exception. To prove that it was entirely foreign to his people, White Wolf cited the experience of a Comanche who was living with the Cheyennes. In his ignorance this individual violated the Cheyenne law by seeking out the herd alone. In consequence, he was visited by the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers, who began slashing his tipi and blankets and killing his horses. The Comanche vigorously protested the punishment to the leader of the group; he argued that it was no offense to hunt alone among his people; he had not known that the Cheyennes felt differently about it.

The Comanches were not unmindful of the need for limitations of individual action. The spontaneous germ, social recognition of communal danger which lay in individual hunting, was clearly there. Experience had taught them the danger of stampeding a herd. Such measures as they did develop show how naturally the buffalo problem did become a focal point for the excrudescence of criminal law in some originating Plains tribe. Thus it was said that if the chief *thought* a certain man was likely to sneak out alone or to break before all were ready, he told the *people* to keep an eye on that fellow.

Suppose some rugged individualist escaped the "eyeing," however. Slope recalled an occasion when he was on a hunt and one man crept out from the camp before daybreak, disregarding the impropriety of his action. While the others were still dreaming of shooting buffalo by the hundreds, he was out shooting those he could get, not stopping to butcher them, eagerly pushing on while the game was good. The band rose early too. The hunters were soon in the field. It was not long before they stalked upon the carcasses. Indignation was high. They moved to drastic action. The hunters pulled their skinning knives and slashed the hides to shreds. The chiseller would have no robes. Then they vindictively scooped sand and dirt from the ground, rubbing it soundly into the flesh. That fixed the sneaker. He knew what they thought of him. The hunt leader pointed the finger at him and told the people to keep an eye on him thereafter. He suffered no physical chastisement, as he would have among the Cheyennes. But the incident and the reputation it left must have dogged him.

Beyond this, however, the Comanches did not go.

[3] Lowie, *Primitive Society*, p. 415; affirmed also by Professor Boas, cf. *Anthropology*, (Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, vol. I, 1935), p. 89.

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In addition to horses, woman must be placed largely in the category of property, for her legal disabilities and low status made her very much a chattel, first to her father and brother, later to her husband. The several facets of this problem have been repeatedly examined in preceding sections. 422 562

In addition, domesticated dogs must be included in the category of private property. They abounded, but were of little economic value or importance save as camp scavengers and to warn of prowling enemies. (Except the notorious Comanche canine, Mákutavai, whose name was on the agency roles for many years as that of an Indian. His owner drew double rations from the government on this ruse.) The number of dogs arose from the existence of a tabu against killing them. Because of their identification with Coyote, dogs are believed to possess some power. To kill one brings bad luck expecially to one's children. People without children trained some dogs as pets, babying them and nursing them like a child. When the band was moving camp, these people would put such dogs on a horse to ride. 422 231

The idea of liability for acts of animals did not exist. There was no recompense for a dog bite. Nor could damages be sought for injuries received from a kicking horse. A quick-tempered man, however, might kill the horse on the spot. In such event, informants said there would be no call for damages to compensate for the horse. So it was with a dog, owned by another person, which was killed in anger. Post Oak Jim thought that "something might have been done about it" if the dog had been given to the owner by a dead friend, but not if the dog had been raised by the owner himself. 672 231

Finally, in regard to food, principles of generosity placed a sort of public lien upon the game a Comanche hunter brought down. A man who returned to camp with meat was obliged to share it with all who came for some. He had to give the best part to his wife to take to her father. Other portions he gave to those who asked. "If a man won't give it away, they camp on him until he does." This means obligation. But performance was not always spontaneous or achieved. In a hard winter She Invites Her Relatives observed that some people moved out of the camp so that they would not have to share their food with the others. Any persons who came upon a hunter and his game could claim any quarter by touching it. If there were enough claimants, the only part going to the slayer was the hide. The hunter asserted his right to this by seizing the tail. How similar this rings to Eskimo practice! The obligation seems here more than mere generosity; "They would camp on him." Generosity based on ethics appears rather in the buffalo hunt, a communal venture with a prospectively full supply, where the slain brutes were individually claimed. There young men were taught to kill a fat cow or two for the old men, who would even make 574 224

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574 224 special request for a certain animal before the active hunters rode into the slaughter.

422 Objects of material culture were personally owned; but the test of ownership was not production so much as use. Clothing was prepared and made by the women, but owned by the person who wore it. A robe made by a woman for herself was hers, while a robe made for her son or husband belonged to that worthy. Tools and utensils used by the women belonged to the women and were also made by them. Every warrior carried his own kit of tools for the making of bows and arrows. This kit was an indispensable part of his personal equipment and was always carried fastened to his body, so that no matter what the emergency he was prepared to equip himself with weapons. Some older men specialized in arrow-making. They gave arrows to petitioners with or without consideration. Each man marked his own arrows with distinctive feathers or by some characteristic of production. Women made saddles for themselves and held them as their own [492] property. The man's saddle, which was of a slightly different style, was [438] owned by the men. Among the Comanches they were made by Mexican [721] captives who specialized in the trade for pay.

422 424 438 Medicine paraphernalia were made by the owner according to his vision directions. If the help of others was needed, they received no pay other than food. The medicine formula was privately owned, but could be transferred in consideration of payment, or given as gift, or inherited. The power itself, however, had to come through a dream as a confirmation of the efficacy of the transfer. War honors were another very distinct form of incorporeal property. These could be transferred as a gift of high esteem, as has been described. They were not, however, articles of trade in economic exchange.

422 586 The tipi, which was made, erected and moved by the woman, was not hers by proprietary right. The decision as to its disposal belonged to the husband, though if generous and well-disposed towards her, he frequently gave it to the wife on separation.

422 Throughout the simple catalogue of goods we find that articles of personal use were usually personally owned according to the principle of effective utilization.

INHERITANCE

428 768 In the disposal of a deceased's property there is but one rule which stood out with constancy: *upon the death of a person all effects of his (or her) personal usage were destroyed*. This included clothing, weapons, saddles, tools, paraphernalia, and horses customarily ridden by the deceased. According to Neighbors, "They also killed their favorite wives, but this custom has

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number of active middle-aged men were chosen by the hunt leader to act as supervisors for the march and hunt. The Shoshone called these officers tá:ɔkoni, "those who surround." The personnel of the police changed from hunt to hunt, and in consequence, they did not form a military or dance society. Their functions were clearly defined, but their enforcing powers were limited. While the camps were on the march, they patrolled the cavalcade on all sides in an endeavor to prevent straggling and exposure to enemy attack. When the hunt was about to begin they attempted to hold back the over-anxious ones among the hunters. They gave orders to people and attempted to back up their commands by quirting the face of the rider's horse, "to shame the rider," but they did not strike people, nor could they confiscate or destroy the property of those who ignored their demands. They could encourage, exhort and exert pressure, but they could not apply force. There is no evidence of their having entered into the regulation of tribal matters other than the control of the march and the hunt. Shoshone policing was Plains policing in its most attenuated form, showing none of the governmental pregnancy which is found in the Cheyenne police organization, for example.[10]

C N 301 224 625

It is interesting that the Comanche, who had incipient military associations, had no buffalo police, while the Shoshone, who had no associations, organized police units for the hunt. That the development of policing powers for the duration of the hunt was not a necessity for the tribes on the southern plains is demonstrated by the Comanches, who succeeded quite well without them. But to the northern Shoshones, who faced the double hazard of attack by superior enemies and a possible inadequacy in numbers of available buffalo, the adaptation of the military police to their needs was of patent value. The patterns of limited authority, which were characteristic of the culture, laid their stamp upon the police organization, diluting it to a skeletal imitation of the institution as it existed on the Plains.

C N 18

Northern Shoshone culture offers little in a positive way for the study of law and government. Its contribution to our knowledge rests mostly on the quasi-anarchistic picture it gives of organization of society on a very rude level of economic and social existence. In relation to the Comanche it throws into relief the background of Comanche amorphism in matters of political organization, at the same time indirectly indicating the dynamic inventiveness of the Comanches in the production of their mechanism of juridical settlements.

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[10] E. A. Hoebel, *Associations and the State in the Plains*, pp. 433–438.

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727 solemnly obligated himself, in case I did, to make a skele-
675 ton of me in the shortest possible space of time, according to the Indian statutes in such case made and provided.

727 Though closely observed, and confined within certain limits, like one out on bail in the old times of imprisonment for debt, I now enjoyed comparative freedom; and as day after day and week after week passed wearily away, had opportunities of observing their habits, customs, and peculiarities, and to become thoroughly conversant with life in a Comanche camp.

727 As before stated, the sole business of the male portion
701 of the tribe was war and hunting. While in camp the Indian is idle, listless, sleeping the greater part of the day and all night. He is slovenly in his dress, except when he meets in council or goes on the war path, when he decorates himself with the scalps he has taken, which at other
727 times hang in his tent. His prowess as a warrior is estimated
701 in proportion to the number he possesses.
554

The most renowned brave in the camp of the Big Wolf—he who could boast the possession of the greatest number of these trophies—was *Hawakakeno*, the Wide River. He was, indeed, a brawny and powerful savage, terrible in battle and quarrelsome in the village. He was feared as well as admired; his word was law among his weaker brethren, and none of all his tribe could stand before him in single contest.

224 To supply the necessaries of life, more or less are con-
492 strained daily to go out upon the hunt. In this, their only labor, they range within a circuit rarely extending more than four or five miles from the town. Their weapons, on these excursions, are the bow and arrow and the lance, both of which they use with great dexterity and skill, especially on horseback. Indeed, in the matter of horsemanship, I

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doubt whether there is a race on the face of the whole earth that equals the Comanches. They will lie along the sides of their horses, while under full speed, directing their course at the same time and discharging arrows from under their necks with deadly effect, in a manner astonishing to witness.

If a deer is captured, he brings it in on his horse, throws it to the women whose business is to dress and cook it. If he kills a mustang or a buffalo, he rides into the village and informs his squaw where the carcass may be found, who straightway mounts and goes out in search of it—skins it —cuts the flesh into strips, and returns.

While the men are thus indolent, the women are remarkable for their industry. Besides attending to the menial duties of the camp, working in the fields during the planting and harvesting seasons, they perform extraordinary labors in preparing buffalo hides and bringing them into the soft and pliant condition in which we see them. To do this properly requires about six weeks, and the process may be new to many of my readers.

When the hide is first brought in green, it is placed upon a log so hewed that it presents a flat surface, perhaps a foot in width. With an instrument similar to a common adze, the squaws cut away all the flesh and part of the bulkiest portions of the hide, until the whole presents a uniform thickness. This is a long and tedious operation. They are then stretched upon frames, and rubbed with a kind of pumice stone until the surface becomes furzy. If it should dry in this state, however, it would be hard, stiff and unpliant. To avoid this, they use a preparation composed of basswood bark pounded very fine and mixed with the brains of the deer or buffalo, which is applied day after day until the skin is thoroughly saturated, when it is soft and flexible.

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The Night Encampment

While crossing one of these little prairies, we espied a 224 bear making his way to the mountain. A part of the Indian's equipage is a *lasso*, tied to his saddle girth, and in the skill and accuracy with which they throw it, they far excel the Mexicans. On this occasion it was brought into use. A couple of them galloped out, one dexterously throwing the noose over Bruin's neck and twitching him on his back, the other as dexterously throwing another over his hind legs, thus subjecting him to a most uncomfortable stretch, as they pulled in opposite directions. A scalping knife soon relieved him of his hide, and a portion of his carcass supplied our evening meal. Bear's flesh is often eaten by them, but is not regarded as equal to buffalo, beef, or venison. They are hunted considerably, however, for their oil, which [281] is used in the preparation of various kinds of skins.

Having descended the western slope of the mountain range, we encamped that night at the extreme point of a narrow valley, which seemed to run up a long distance between the hills. Wearied with a hard day's travel, I hastened 727 to cook my own and Big Wolf's supper—for I was com- 264 pelled to act towards him in the capacity of a servant—and then lay down to rest. Though I brought his water, and cooked his food, and slept in his tent, and was in fact, his menial and slave, Big Wolf never, in a single instance, placed the horn of water to his lips or put a morsel of flesh into his mouth until I had tasted them. This, also, was the case with the two chiefs to whom I subsequently belonged. Whether it was through fear of poison, or dictated by some singular superstition, is more than I am able to determine.

Setting out again early in the morning, we traveled down ~~ooo~~ the little winding valley until it opened into an extensive plain. Here we struck a narrow but very rapid stream, when

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727 first carried away into captivity. This, I supposed, was the extent of the penalty I was doomed to suffer, but a short time taught me I was sorely and painfully mistaken. The Spotted Leopard, drawing down my leggin, with the coolness of the most practised surgeon, drew the edge of his knife across the cartilage or tendon just below the kneepan of my right leg. The muscle was not entirely severed, as was evidently his intention. The object of this surgical operation was to cripple me in such manner as to render escape impossible, even should a favorable opportunity present itself. For two weeks I was kept tied down, the chief frequently, during that time, bending the leg back and forth, each time breaking open the wound afresh. Eventually, however, I was unbound, and the wound permitted to heal, leaving a formidable cicatrice, and rendering the limb extremely stiff, not to such a degree, however, as it was his purpose to make it.

224 727 492 In the winter following, some 250 of the warriors, armed with bows and arrows, lances, tomahawks, and knives, set out on their annual grand buffalo hunt. They were mounted on their choice horses, while I, who accompanied the chief as his servant, rode, unarmed, a dilapidated mule.

224 It is only in the cold months that the skin of the buffalo has any value for the purposes of traffic. Then, only, is it covered with wool, being, in the warm summer weather, with the exception of a tuft of mane, entirely bare. During the latter period they are only killed as the necessity of food requires—their skins then being used for the construction of tents.

224 492 On these annual excursions, they are followed by a large number of mules that not only carry out their buffalo-hunting tents, which simply consist of one or more skins,

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thrown over a pole resting on crossed stakes—but also bring back the hides they may succeed in taking.

On the occasion I now refer to, the party moved west, threading their winding way over the mountains, and across numerous streams and valleys of greater or less width and extent. In the afternoon of the third day we struck a wide, rolling prairie. Dividing it nearly in the center was a high, smooth ridge—its summit reached from both sides by an easy, gradual ascent. As we crossed the prairie and approached this ridge, our scattered cavalcade extended, perhaps, a quarter of a mile, moving forward carelessly, and in no order whatever. I was at the extreme rear, by the side of the Spotted Leopard, and surrounded by the pack mules. As the foremost horsemen reached the height, they halted suddenly, making hurried signs, while two or three of the braves galloped back down the slope, riding eagerly to and fro among their brethren, as if urging them to push forward without delay. The whole band, thereupon, dashed up the hill, except the Spotted Leopard and myself, who remained with the mules in the rear, and on reaching the summit deployed into line. By this time I had heard the cry of "the Apaches, the Apaches," and knew at once there was hot work at hand.

As yet, however, I had seen nothing of an enemy, and only drew the inference there was one present from the cries I had heard, and the general commotion that prevailed. In the course of two or three minutes after our line formed on the ridge, the air was rent with the noise of the war whoop, and up the opposite ascent, at full speed, came the Apaches in solid body, like a black cloud. As they approached, a shower of arrows were discharged from both lines, when they rushed upon each other in a hand-to-hand encounter.

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Battle with the Apaches

As soon as they had left the ground, the Apaches again appeared upon the height, and bore away their dead also. It was a drawn battle.

This encounter was unexpected on both sides. The Apaches, as I learned, were gathered around a spring, cooking their meat, little expecting the approach of an enemy, when the van of our party came upon them. At that time a deadly strife existed between the tribes, and it would have been a scandalous violation of an Indian's idea of manhood to have separated, under such circumstances, without a bloody tilt at arms.

The Comanches lost in this battle seventeen warriors; the Apaches, probably as many more. Had the combatants belonged to a civilized people who keep a record of their wars, it would have furnished a thrilling page of history; but thousands of such sanguinary struggles take place on the lonely prairies of which the world knows not. That same season, however, they buried the tomahawk and danced the pipe dance, and henceforward were at peace.

The close of this eventful day was occupied in burying the slain, which ceremony was performed in their customary manner, except they seemed to chant the death song with more energy and feeling than on ordinary occasions. With them, death, at any time, even the nearest and dearest of their kindred, is not regarded as an event to be deplored, but on the contrary, to be welcomed with rejoicing; but when a warrior dies on the field of battle, their joy and exultation knows no bounds, for their crude theology assures them his departed spirit is, at once, caught up by the Great Spirit, and borne to the region of everlasting and supreme felicity.

We saw no more of the Apaches, and the following day turned our course up the prairie—crossed the mountains

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224 into a still wider prairie—and there, at a watering place, pitched our camp. Here we remained two months, meeting with unanticipated success. Thousands and thousands of buffalo, in immense droves, were roving over the plain, and it was an easy task to obtain as many hides as the mules could carry home.

484 574 622 [551] On the return, which was by a different route from that we came, we fell in with a party of two or three hundred, a friendly tribe, who accompanied us back to the camp. Their chief was Kan-sa-le-um-ko, the Rolling Thunder. He was agreeable, though sedate—a compound of benign dignity and solemnity—a chief who plainly preferred falling on his face before the prophet, in the time of the new moon, to dancing the war dance with the warriors.

574 The Rolling Thunder and his tribe remained with us a week, and it was, indeed, a week of carnival and merriment. First of all was the war dance, and then followed the solemn discourses of Che-ra-se-chick-a-lo, the prophet, and after them came the ring dance and the pipe dance, and the feast of the roasted dog. During these entertainments, the good Kianceta and myself played a conspicuous part in the exhibition of the watch. As on all former occasions, it captivated the simple children of nature, and particularly the [622] Rolling Thunder, whose reverent temperament led him to refer all mysteries, whether great or small, to the wonder-working power of the Great Spirit.

574 727 Soon after the departure of Rolling Thunder and his people came another large party and pitched their hunting tents on the bank of the stream, outside the town. The day following their arrival, I observed our warriors, belted, and decorated with trinkets and scalps, moving towards their encampment. Something unusual, I felt confident, was about to take place. Distant but a quarter of a mile, I

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Visit to the Ruins

The battle lasted but a moment, the bright blades, in 578
the meantime, glittering and glimmering in the sun, and the contestants instantly presenting the appearance of men suddenly overtaken by a storm of blood. At length, a mortal thrust by one was followed by a fierce blow from the other, gashing through the side of the neck, from which the purple tide of life spouted up in a high wide arch, when both fell lifeless to the ground.

Had either survived the conflict, according to their code of honor, it would have been the duty of his brother to have put him immediately to death. Throughout the exciting scene not the slightest partiality was exhibited. The faintest shadow of emotion could not be detected upon the countenances of the savage stoics as they gazed upon it. They were stretched side by side on the spot where they had fallen—buried in the customary manner—and left to rest together in peace, at last.

The week succeeding this tragedy, a party of ten or 484
twelve, including the Rolling Thunder and myself, started 224
on a long journey, its object being to ascertain whether the buffalo droves had changed their feeding grounds, before the warriors set out on their annual hunt. In the course of this trip we crossed a valley, the singular appearance of which has very frequently since been the subject of study and reflection.

On the summit of many of the mountains we passed, 172
were broad, level tablelands, destitute of a solitary tree, and covered with rank grass. Upon every one of these elevated plains was to be seen a mound, in most instances in the form of a half-circle, resembling the overgrown ruins of an ancient fortress, and plainly the work of human hands.

Finally we descended into a ravine, walled on either 133
side by rugged cliffs which led us a day's ride to the south-

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186 that at some period, more or less remote, this valley had
773 been inhabited by a people skilled in architecture and evidently possessing, in a high degree, a knowledge of mechanism and the arts. Whether the Rolling Thunder's account of their destruction is correct, or his belief that their successors will eventually be disposed of in the same summary manner is orthodox, will admit of argument; nevertheless, there is no doubt that, in common with all the tribes of the Comanches, he entertains this belief, in genuine sincerity. It is this unwavering faith in the future ascendancy of the red man, and the final restoration to him of all the possessions he has lost, which prompts him to perpetual resistance, and which so often led the Rolling Thunder to exclaim, after I had described some marvelous invention—"Wonderful, wonderful are the works of the white man, but the Great Spirit will destroy them all."

224 After leaving the volcanic valley and ascertaining the feeding grounds of the bison, we returned to the village, and soon again set forth on the yearly buffalo hunt. It is
[136] a singular fact that on these excursions the hunters are followed by droves of wolves. They seem to have an instinctive knowledge of the business in which the party is about to engage. As soon as the skin is stripped from the
ooo buffalo they surround the carcass and devour it. To wake in the dead of night, after dreaming, peradventure, of early home and friends, to find yourself under a rude tent, in those far distant wilds, surrounded by a savage tribe, produces sensations, lonely and desolate indeed—but terror mingles with the sense of desolation when, all around, the adjacent solitudes are vocal with the barking and snarling and howling of wolves, gorging themselves at their midnight feasts.

It was at such times as these my soul longed to reach once

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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received at least one horse. Some unimportant people got as many as five or six, and the Cheyenne chiefs many more.[13] 728

The numerous wild herds which roamed the Southern Plains afforded an ever ready supply to any Comanches who could take them—frequently a difficult task. The mustang, which played an important part in Comanche culture, was peculiarly fitted for its role. Small, agile, and tough, it was capable of surprising speed and possessed of great endurance. Its small, pointed, alert ears and quick, wicked eyes often signalled approaching danger before the rider himself was aware of it. The mustang was also a good forager and could obtain his own food even in the winter, when he was forced to live on bark and twigs. His life was in a way as hard and unadorned as that of the Indians. The frugal, wiry little creature became the fitting symbol of the equally frugal cultures of the Plains Indians. 224

The Comanches resorted to several methods of capturing wild mustangs. One necessitated building a corral, usually near or around a water hole, with diverging wings. The unsuspecting animals were driven between the wings until they entered the pen and were trapped. The Kiowas used this method extensively; the Comanches only occasionally. The Spaniards also used the plan, but it was so similar to the old Indian method of impounding antelope that it is probably an Indian adaptation of an old way to a new situation. In 1852 the Comanches were using "corrals into which four hundred or five hundred head could be driven."[14] Fortunately, a good description of such a corral in use before 1836 has survived. The corral was situated in an opening in blackjack timber. It was oval in shape, the opening being at one end. The fence was a stockade formed of blackjack posts set close together on end with brush and limbs of trees piled against the outside of the fence. The wings, made of brush, were heaped up high and wide, so that a horse could neither see through nor jump over them.[15] Once inside the pen, the mustangs were prisoners.

After the introduction of firearms, wild horses were often captured by "creasing"—a delicate task requiring expert marksmanship. To crease a horse was to shoot it through the muscular part of the

[13] G. B. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 63–66.

[14] Anon., "Reminiscences of Service among the Comanches," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, June, 1882, 662–63.

[15] G. B. Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, I, 292.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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224 neck above the vertebrae. If the marksman could hit it there and not fracture the spine, the animal dropped to the ground paralyzed for two or three minutes. A neat trick! This gave the hunter time to rope and tie the mustang before it knew what was happening. It would soon recover, however, and when the wound healed, be as good as ever.

Young horses that had been driven from the herds by stallions were often found on the prairie in considerable numbers. When such a herd was discovered in a convenient location, the Indians would drive out a few gentle, old mares as lures. The young horses would mingle with the mares, and after a time some of them could be taken.

Lassoing was a popular Comanche method of capturing wild horses, even though relatively few animals were taken in this manner. It was an art in which the Comanche was often an expert. The skill required and the danger involved in lassoing a wild horse gave young men a real chance to show off and gain prestige while enjoying an exciting sport. It would seem natural that, other things being equal, a horse running free could not be overtaken by one carrying a rider and that the best of the wild horses would get away. The Comanches were wily enough to see to it that other things were not always equal.

In the wintertime or early spring, cold weather and lack of food sometimes made the wild horses thin and weak. At such times a chaser mounted on a fast horse that had received good care could readily overtake the mares that were thin from suckling colts or those that were heavy with foal—and even some of the stallions. In the summer, according to Post Oak Jim, wild horses became so fat that they were sluggish on their feet. Then it was possible to run them down on a good horse that had been kept in trim. In any event, by ganging up on a wild herd, a group of riders spread over a wide area could drive the herd toward a second group of riders hidden in a clump of underbrush or behind a hill. As the herd came near, the concealed Indians would dash suddenly into their midst and do their roping before the wild beasts had recovered from their surprise.

If there was no convenient hiding place, as often there was not on the open plains, the chasers sometimes undertook to surround the herd. In their efforts to break through the circle, the wild horses were forced to pass close enough to some of the riders that they could drop a noose over them.

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The Horse and the Buffalo

Of all the techniques of taking mustangs, one of the easiest was to ambush them at the water hole. It was the habit of the wild horses to feed as much as ten or more miles out on the prairie from the nearest water. They would munch on the grass until thirsty. Then they would run the whole distance to the nearest hole. Hot and thirsty, they guzzled their bellies full. The Comanche, mounted on a good, rested horse, could dart from his ambush and quickly take a water-logged mustang which he could not even have approached a few minutes earlier.[16]

In capturing the hard-to-take stallions, however, the best way was to stalk them with a team of co-operating hunters. Each herd tended to move about within a limited range of territory; when flushed, it was likely to travel in a circle, returning eventually to or near the spot where it was originally found. To accomplish this end, one or more horsemen kept the herd continuously on the move without allowing it either to eat or to drink. This was not too difficult, for the stalkers, by remaining on the inside of the circle, traveled a much shorter distance than the herd. When their own mounts wearied, the riders were replaced by others or were supplied with fresh mounts. This procedure was continued without let-up for two or three days or until the herd became exhausted, when a number of riders on fresh mounts rode in and lassoed their pick of the wild horses.

To catch a wild horse is only half the job—if a man intends to ride him. There is yet the breaking to be done. The mustang was choked into exhaustion, thrown to the ground, and subjected to having the breath of the captor blown into its nostrils. The "wild" hairs were pulled from around its eyes. A headstall or hackamore, a loop of rope about the under jaw brought up and tied about the neck with a knot that would not slip, was put on the animal.[17] The captive was usually tied to a gentle mare in such a way as to keep it from injuring the mare during its first efforts to escape. While the horse was still tied to the mare, the owner handled it enough to make it gentle. After a few days it was set free, and thereafter followed the mare wherever she went. When the time came to ride his wild mustang,

[16] Noah Smithwick, *The Evolution of a State*, 187.

[17] C. and J. D. Smith, *op. cit.*, 67; Baldwin Möllhausen, *Diary of a Journey from the Mississippi to the Pacific with a United States Government Expedition*, 1, 186–87.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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brought forth a miserable-looking pony with a three-inch coat of thick hair and a general appearance of neglect and suffering. Its rider "looked big enough to carry the poor beast on his shoulders" and was armed with a club with which he belabored the animal from starting line to the finish. Yet, to the surprise of the whites the Indian pony managed to win by a neck. Within an hour the officers bit again and lost by a nose. Then they suggested a third race and brought out a magnificent Kentucky racing mare. In a frenzy of excitement the Indians bet everything that the whites would take. With the starting signal the Indian rider threw away his club, gave a whoop, and his little mount "went away like the wind." That Kentucky mare was soon so far behind that for the last fifty yards the Comanche sat backwards on his pony beckoning to the white rider to come on. The whites afterwards learned that the shaggy pony was a celebrated racer, and that the Comanches had just come back from fleecing the Kickapoos to the tune of six hundred ponies with that same little horse.[82]

Straight-run relay races from a standing start for a distance "ten times the distance you can shoot an arrow," or a good two miles, made a favorite run. Shorter obstacle races put both speed and control to a rigorous test.

To the Comanche, then, the horse was an intimate household friend, a beast of burden, a counter in the great prestige game of the warriors, a "gamer," and an occasional source of food. But it was to the buffalo that he turned for his economic mainstay.

The buffalo was as indispensable to the Comanche as the horse. No part of the slaughtered animal was wasted except the rump, spine, and skull. Hair, skin, flesh, blood, bones, entrails, horns, sinews, kidneys, liver, paunch, and the dried excrement were all utilized. The Indian ate its flesh, the marrow of its bones, the contents of the gall bladder on raw liver, and even at times its entrails—a habit left over from Shoshone days. Of the edible parts, only the heart was unconsumed; it was left for magical perpetuation of the herds.

When the Comanche was thirsty and water was not available, there was the blood of the buffalo. Its paunch, after the inner lining was removed, was used as a water bag and also as a container in which

[82] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 329–30.

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migrations. In the fall they moved south from two hundred to four hundred miles to winter in a more favorable climate, drifting north again with the coming of spring. In spring and summer the herds shifted away from the mountains; in winter, toward them. 136

The number of buffalo on the plains before commercial slaughter began reached a figure that staggers the imagination. In Kansas alone, it has been estimated that the bones of thirty-one million head were gathered and sold for fertilizer between 1868 and 1881.[34] A vast herd comprising considerably more than four million animals was seen by competent witnesses in 1871 on the Arkansas River between Fort Zarah and Fort Larned. The main herd was fifty miles deep and twenty-five miles wide—and this was only one of the many herds in existence at the time. On one occasion when the Great Herd moved north, it extended more than one hundred miles in width and was of unknown length, and it was estimated conservatively that the herd contained over one hundred million head.[35] Small wonder that the Comanches forgot to a great extent the starvation fears that beset the poor Shoshones!

Buffalo hunting for the Comanche followed fairly closely a regular pattern. At certain seasons, when the animals were fat, the hunt became a tribal affair and the slaughter of the great beasts took the shape of a co-operative venture. The great communal hunts occurred during the summer months after the seasonal moulting was done and the hides were in their prime, and during November and December when the hides, covered with a dark, seal-brown coat of fur, were best for winter robes. Preparation for the great fall hunt began in October, and the time was determined in democratic assembly at which everyone was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders made the important decisions. 224

Having decided upon an approximate time and location for the hunt, the entire camp became alive with activity. Runners were sent to seek a location for the temporary hunting camp. It must be near water and timber. Scaffolds must be erected for drying the meat. When all was ready, the young and able-bodied men, women, and

[34] Henry Inman, *The Old Santa Fé Trail*, 203.

[35] Martin S. Garretson, *The American Bison*, 44–64. The estimate was made by General Philip H. Sheridan, Major Henry Inman, and Robert M. Wright who lived for fifty years in the heart of the buffalo country.

224 older children left the main camp for the operating base. Mules and pack horses were used to transport the hunting tents, which consisted simply of one or more undercoated skins thrown over a pole resting on crossed stakes. They were also to bring back to the main camp the many hides and quantities of meat that would be taken. Only weapons, tools, and supplies that seemed necessary for the occasion were carried.

224 There was plenty of hard work for all concerned, but it was work
535 spiced by anticipation of the excitement of great feasts and sharpened by gay social activity. This was really the "Harvest Season." On at least one and possibly for several evenings before the hunting party left the main camp, the people gathered for the Hunting Dance at the central meeting place of the village just as lengthening shadows faded into darkness. The hunting party itself often continued to dance for one or more nights after they had left the main camp. There was no spiritual significance attached to the dance; each Comanche informant insists that the people danced because they "were glad they were going on a hunt." Why not? For the dance a fire was built, unless a bright autumn moon provided sufficient light. There
[801] were two, four, or more drummers and singers, always an even number. The drummers and singers were men who had good voices, but for such strictly social dances no medicine powers were essential. Men and women lined up facing each other, and when the music began, the women crossed over and selected a partner. The dancers joined at intervals in the singing. They wore their everyday clothes, for no special ceremonial dress was necessary on this occasion. During the dance one man took care of the fire, but the wood was gathered by any of the enthusiastic dancers who wished to help. About midnight the dance ended and the people scattered to their lodges for sleep.[36]

224 The regulation of communal buffalo hunts under the strict surveillance of military police was one of the outstanding features of the cultures of practically all the Plains tribes. But of this the Comanches had nothing. They had, of course, no military fraternities such as those which did the policing for the other tribes, and in spite of their fierce individualism they seem not to have had the need for police

[36] Informants: Face Wrinkling Like Getting Old; Kills Something.

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when it came to hunting. Here the unruly Comanche behaved himself very well. Group discipline prevailed, and all worked for the common good. The rules of the game were known and respected. 224

Each hunt had a hunt leader who was the director for the occasion. He was a respected warrior and a man of good judgment, that we know. But whether he was appointed to the position or merely assumed it by common consent cannot be said. He gave general directions for the conduct of the hunt, and his was the power to signal the attack—for all the hunters charged simultaneously.

In the execution of the hunt the exact location of the herd was first determined by scouts. Then the hunters were out before the dawn of day. A narrow valley with many lateral ravines was considered to be very favorable. Moving up into position against the wind in a great semicircle, the band of hunters remained quietly on horseback out of sight of the buffalo. Buffalo have a keen sense of smell, but their wool partially obscures their sight and their sense of hearing is not acute. As they approached the buffalo, the hunters gradually spread until the herd was encircled except on the windward side. Everything ready, the leader gave the signal, the gap was rapidly closed, and the whole circle closed in. The Indians ran their ponies around the herd, forming it into a compact mass. The bulls would force the cows and calves to the center of the pack, and would then run around and around the margin, presenting themselves broadside to the hunters. In the surround, the buffalo often became bewildered and ceased to run. Killing them was then easy. Outer guards were in a position to turn back or kill any animals which escaped the hunters on the inside of the circle, but escaping buffalo were not pursued if other herds were in the vicinity.

At other times, particularly if the topography of the land was unfavorable for making a close surround, the hunters stalked the herd against the wind to get as near as possible without being detected. Then they lined up to get an even start, and at a given signal all charged the animals. The main function of the simultaneous charge was to prevent the scattering of the herd by a few individuals, but equally important was the need to kill as many buffalo as quickly as possible, for the meat would spoil before it could be cured if the animal when slain was overheated from long running.

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224 492 It was necessary to have well-trained horses, for the time of the slaughter was short. The first step in training a horse for buffalo running was to make him rope shy. This was done by twisting one end of a rawhide rope around the lower jaw, allowing the free end to trail. The trainer then mounted another pony and proceeded to prod the horse with whip, lance, or switch. For a short time, the horse, stepping on the halter rope, found it difficult to run. A few falls and hard jerks, however, were usually sufficient, and afterwards the horse very skillfully avoided stepping on any rope. Horses were trained also to run without bridle or rope of any kind, being guided by knee pressure.

224 Buffalo hunting, although hard work and dangerous, was truly exciting. When chasing buffalo, the Comanches, like other Indians, usually discarded all clothing except the breechclout. They rode bareback, although occasionally a small pad was used. Frequently a rope was wound in loose coils around the horse's body, just back of the forelegs; by thrusting his knees under the rope, the rider maintained a firm seat while in action. Each hunter rode upon the buffalo from the rear, coming in close on its right side and shooting at the soft spot between the protruding hip bone and the last rib. This was the only way to reach the vitals. The heart of the animal hung low, and since the rider was slightly behind and above the buffalo, the arrow slanted into the soft spot behind the short rib and ranged forward and downward. Driven with terrific force at such close range, the shaft often completely buried itself or passed all the way through the animal, even on occasion bringing down a second animal running alongside. A hunter sometimes pulled the arrow from the victim while the animal was still running. As soon as he heard the twang of the bow string, a good buffalo-running horse swerved away from its victim in order to be well out of harm's way when the wounded beast turned and charged. Unfortunately, the horse was not always quick enough to prevent being gored, and frequently a mount stepped in a prairie-dog hole, breaking its leg and throwing its rider. Many a hunter received broken limbs as a result of such accidents, and some were killed, but it was a risk taken with joy.[37]

[37] C. C. Rister, "Indians as Buffalo Hunters," *Frontier Times*, Vol. V (April, 1928), 456; Gregg, *op. cit.*, 361–62.

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When the hunt was over, each dead buffalo was the property of the man who killed it. Public-spirited men of consequence gave some of their kill to old men or widows or to families who had no hunters to provide for them. A hunter had no extreme difficulty in identifying the buffalo which he had killed. He might be able to recall the location of the animals, their appearance, the position of the wounds, and he easily could recognize his own marked arrows. If arrows of different men were found in the same dead buffalo, ownership was determined by the position of the arrows. If each arrow had inflicted a mortal wound, the buffalo might be divided, or more likely it was set aside as a portion of the charity fund. The hunter leader usually made the decision in case of argument.

Another and early method of killing the buffalo, and one which remained popular among the Comanches until the last, was with the lance. Josiah Gregg says that the Comanche often charged the buffalo with a long-handled spear or lance, which, if the horse was well trained, was much more effective than the bow and arrow or the American pistol.[38] In using the lance, the rider approached the buffalo from behind and held the lance across his body, the opposite hand from the buffalo being the higher. When the buffalo was slightly ahead of the horse, the hunter, using both hands, thrust his lance downward and forward, aiming for the heart, although some hunters thrust downward for the kidneys, hoping to break down and cripple the animal. When the buffalo felt the prick of the lance, it usually ran faster. When it attempted to turn and charge, the hunter pressed the lance firmly into its side until the buffalo gave way and ran on, or until it fell.

Although relatively few buffalo were taken in modern times by any other than the above methods, other means were occasionally employed. One was to drive the buffalo over a precipice or into a river. Fortunately an excellent description of this method has survived.

> This mode of hunting was to select one of the most active and fleet young men, who, disguised with a buffalo skin fastened about his body, with the horns and ears so secured as to deceive the buffalo, placed himself at a convenient distance between the herd

[38] Gregg, *op. cit.*, 363.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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of buffalo and some of the river precipices, which sometimes extend for miles. His companions, in the meantime, get in the rear and along the flanks of the herd and, showing themselves at a given signal, advance upon the herd. The herd, thus alarmed, runs from the hunters toward the river. The Indian, who thus acts as a decoy, when the precipice is reached, suddenly secures himself in some crevice of the cliff previously selected, leaving the herd on the brink. It is then impossible for the foremost of the herd to retreat or to turn aside, being pressed on by those behind, and they tumble headlong off the cliff, strewing the shore with their bodies.[39]

The hunters rushed up to take a heavy toll of those failing to make a quick escape. This, of course, was a survival of the favored buffalo drive of prehistoric Indians on the plains.

The individual hunter sometimes employed a still more unique method. He wrapped himself with the hide of a wolf or a buffalo and on "all-fours" crept within shooting distance of the unsuspecting animals. Care had to be taken to approach toward the wind always. It was then possible for the hunter with bow and arrow to kill a number of animals before the unwary herd realized the source of its danger.[40]

Among many Plains tribes the women took over as soon as the men had shot the buffalo down. According to Comanche informants[41] the heavy work of skinning and butchering was done by the men. Cows were left lying on their sides, but bulls were heaved over to set on their bellies with all fours spread. They were then ready for butchering. The brisket was first slashed across at the neck and folded back so the forequarters could be removed at the joint. Then the hide was sliced down the middle of the spine in such a way as not to cut the sinews, which were removed intact. After the hide was peeled back toward both sides, the hind quarters were disjointed, leaving the rump with the back. The flank was next cut up toward the stomach and removed in one piece with the brisket—the whole thin

[39] J. A. Allen, "History of the American Bison," United States Geological and Geographical Survey, *Annual Report*, IX (1875), 574–75.

[40] Rister, "Indians as Buffalo Hunters," *loc. cit.*, 456.

[41] Informants: Post Oak Jim; Slope.

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chunk being made up into one roll of meat. Now the butcher cut up through the ventral to remove the entrails, separating the ribs from the sternum. Slicing between the middle ribs, he next took their free ends in both hands and pulled up and outward to break the rib steaks off from the spine. At last, the bare spine with rump and head was all that remained; the tail had been skinned out with the hide. The meat was bagged in the hides, loaded on the pack horses, and all was ready to be toted back to the main camp for further processing.

Comanche hunters who were out butchering alone had their buffalo horses trained to stand by as sentinels. Butchering in a hurry is an intense business and a man cannot very well keep a close lookout for danger. But he could give a quick glance to his horse's ears. His horse had learned to "wave" his ears alternately if another buffalo or coyote was close. If it was a man, he pitched both ears forward. "Thus many lives were saved," says White Wolf.

Back in the camp, the men's work was done for the time being. While the women turned to, the bucks relaxed in feasting and recounting their exploits. The women were slicing the meat into very thin filets which were hung over the racks for a quick sun-drying. Hides were pegged out on the ground, flesh side up, so that they could be fleshed and scraped for later tanning.

As soon as the women caught up with their work, another kill was made. This procedure continued until enough meat and skins were obtained and cold weather drove the Indians to their winter camp, or until there were no more buffalo.

Buffalo were so plentiful in the Southern Plains that the Comanches rarely bothered to fortify themselves for the communal hunt by making medicine. There were times, nevertheless, when the wandering herds could not be found. Then the "chief," or hunt leader, went with his pipe to a medicine man who had power. Offering his smoke, he asked that the hunt ritual be performed. His wish would be granted, but unfortunately we do not have the details of the kind of medicine that was made. Presumably it was similar to the magic antelope surround described in the next chapter.

The horned toad was also believed to be a help in locating the buffalo, for when asked the question, "he will always run in the

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direction of buffalo." That is why he is called *kusɛtɛmini*, "asking about the buffalo." Ravens also were buffalo pointers in Comanche belief. They like to eat carrion and were always following the herds to eat the bugs on their hides. When a raven circled over the camp four times, dipping his head and cawing, "he was telling The People where the herd is; he will fly off and show the way."[42]

Toward the end of or soon after the hunt, a man and wife of respectable family who were noted for their goodness and purity were likely to give a Buffalo Tongue Dance or feast. Men, women, and the older unmarried adolescents who had participated in the hunt were encouraged to attend. The ceremony began early in the morning and ended with the meal at midday. A fire was built outside the tipi and the buffalo tongues were roasted over the coals. When the meat was done, the men were asked to seat themselves in a semicircle about the fire. The women took a position about twenty steps from the opening of the circle. The host or a leading medicine man lighted the pipe. He blew the first puff of smoke toward the sun, the second toward the earth, and one in each of the four directions. The pipe was then passed to the other men who smoked likewise. This was an oath by which the smoker bound himself to speak truthfully.

After all had smoked, a woman was called upon to come forward and serve the tongue. Any man who had had illicit sexual relations with her called out, "no, no," and she returned to her place. If everyone remained quiet, she came forward and served the tongue to the assembled group amid much applause and shrill cries of "li-li-li-li" from all the women present. No dancing or singing accompanied the ceremony.[43]

This little act was lifted bodily from the Sun Dance complex of other Plains Indians. A Cheyenne Sun Dance giver must collect hundreds of buffalo tongues to distribute to the Sun Dance officers and participants. The Crow ritual called for an "absolutely virtuous woman to serve as Tree-notcher, one who had been purchased in marriage and had been scrupulously chaste."[44] Virtue was tested in a manner similar to that just described. Among Indians like the Crows

[42] Informant: Post Oak Jim.

[43] Informants: Kills Something; Face Wrinkling Like Getting Old. Other informants were aware of this ceremony.

[44] R. H. Lowie, *The Crow Indians*, 312.

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and Comanches, who really did not expect much in the way of marital fidelity, the stunt seems to be a little meaningless. Among the Cheyennes, however, who originally built up the Sun Dance complex,[45] family virtue was actually adhered to, and every military society had four virginal maidens as essential ritual assistants. As an adjunct of Comanche buffalo tongue banquets, ritual chastity had no place, but as a chance for good-humored teasing it seems to have appealed to the Comanche sense of a good thing.

Had the Comanches and other Plains Indians been left undisturbed by intruders, the buffalo might have supplied their needs indefinitely. But the white man pushed ever relentlessly westward, and intruding Indian bands along the border of the Comanche country began to trespass upon the Comanche hunting grounds. The effects of these encroachments on the country soon began to be felt in a vital way—in the diminishing supply of buffalo. The period between 1830 and 1860 witnessed such destruction that the hunters found it increasingly difficult to sustain their families by hunting.

During the colonial period in Texas, buffalo were seen as far south as the vicinity of the present city of Houston. As early as 1833 explorers and adventurers in the region of the Arkansas and Canadian rivers had begun to observe that the eastern edge of the buffalo range was retreating westward rapidly. The Osage agent wrote in 1841 that his Indians had to extend their hunting operations each year farther and farther into the plains to obtain even a scant supply, and that it would soon be necessary for them to learn to farm.[46] In 1846 it was estimated that one hundred thousand buffalo cow hides annually reached the Canadian and American markets. The bull hides were then regarded as worthless for commercial purposes. At the same time Torrey's Trading House was getting three dollars each for ordinary, and eight dollars for choice, hides.[47] It is difficult to determine how extensively professional white hunters operated during the period be-

[45] L. Spier, "The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, XVI, Part 7 (1921).

[46] Agent Wm. Armstrong, *Annual Report*, 1841, 27 Cong., 2 sess., *House Exec. Doc. 2*, No. 34, 316–17.

[47] C. C. Rister, "The Significance of the Destruction of the Buffalo in the Southwest," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII (1929), 34–39. Torrey's was the official company of the Republic of Texas for trading with the Indians.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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IV

Food, Clothing, and Dwellings

ALTHOUGH the subsistence activities of the Comanches centered around the buffalo, theirs was not a one-crop economy. Elk were plentiful in the brushy regions bordering the rivers and their tributaries. The black bear, found in the Cross Timbers, was hunted largely for its oil, which was used in the preparation of hides. The Comanches considered bear meat less tasty than either buffalo or deer. Principally within the region of the High Plains, in the heart of the buffalo country, roamed herds of antelope in great numbers. A herd of about two thousand was once seen at Fort Dodge.[1]

Food was usually plentiful enough that the Comanches no longer bothered, as did the horseless Shoshones, to run down antelope until the frightened and exhausted animals dropped. But they did retain from their Shoshonean background the magical antelope surround that was so widely used by the Indians of the Great Basin.

It was used among the Comanches only when the whole camp was out of food. Then the camp leaders would go to a medicine man or a medicine woman who had antelope power. They would smoke and tell him the trouble. According to Slope's account, the medicine man called for an antelope dance lasting several days to work up his power and to draw in the antelope. He selected two men to whom he gave some of his power for what they had to do. When all was

[1] Garretson, *op. cit.*, 64.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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ready, the people arranged themselves in two parallel lines facing east, the antelope medicine man at the center with the two warriors mounted on either side of him. Everyone else was afoot. In his hands the conjurer held his medicine sticks—two antelope hoofs, each on a piece of wood. Crossing his arms halfway below the elbow, a stick in each hand, he "blocked" the antelope. They could not run away. Then, giving one medicine stick to each of the warriors, he bade them ride off. One went northeast; the other southeast. Circling wide, they met and passed each other a mile or so to the east. They were drawing a magical barrier. Against its power the hapless antelope would be helpless. Each rider returned along the path laid by the other; the circle was closed. Now the two files of people—men, women, and children—followed out along the trails of the horsemen until they were standing in a huge circle, all singing antelope songs.

The antelope were now inside the circle, and the people closed in on them, shouting. The animals were in the corral. They dashed wildly about, but they could not cross the line. At last, when they were exhausted, the medicine man pointed one of his hoofs at an antelope who had one horn down. He would fall dead. "The people then pile in and kill them all."

The skeptic may say that it was the circle of shouting beaters who bunched the animals. But not the Comanche. He was convinced that without the medicine charm they would break through the circle and escape. The medicine hunt was not used often, but Comanches say it worked.

There is some disagreement about how fond the Comanches were of horse meat, but when game was not available, it was eaten and relished. Raiding parties normally carried few rations with them, and when the supply was exhausted, they simply killed and cooked a spare horse on the spot. Thomas C. Battey, who was one of the first white teachers among the Comanches, states that buffalo, antelope, or deer were preferred, but if not obtainable, a pony or a mule was the next choice. Modern Comanches agree with him. We have already called the Comanches "pastoralists," but they were not strictly so in that they did not rely to any great extent on their horse herds for food, and they never killed their mares. Around the middle of the nineteenth century they had plenty of horses to eat, yet the values

The Comanches

spent in gang play. When a new camp was set up, they set out to find a good water hole in the creek where they could play all day. Following and baiting small birds and large insects fascinated them. Hummingbirds were shot with headless arrows having a vertically split foreshaft in which to catch the birds. Boys would spend all day chasing one bird, according to Skinny and Wrinkled, in a kind of concentration that boded well for the future hunter and tracker of men and beasts. Bull bats were shot with arrows having horizontally split foreshafts. Grasshoppers were shot with hummingbird arrows, and their hind legs were eaten for lunch.

The boys had great fun by tying two grasshoppers together with a short thread and then crowding about to watch them "wrestle." They would jump and jerk each other up short. The one that first fell on its back was the loser. They liked to catch "shit rollers," tie a piece of straw to a leg, and watch them fly, running fleetly after them as they followed their courses. They would stick a small straw up the anus of a horsefly and turn the insect loose—which perhaps showed how they felt about horseflies.

Small boys, who had no real arrows, made them of reed shafts with grasshopper legs for points and a ballast daub of mud stuck two inches from the point. They killed night hawks with slings and amused themselves playing with whirrers—two strings attached to a bone and pulled taut to make a whirring noise.

Although boys were by themselves most of the time, the younger ones now and then joined the little girls to play camp. On the sand by the creek they built small windbreaks and arbors. A play group leader was made "chief," and each boy chose a wife or wives. They all swam in the creek, gathered in ponies with the girls, and rode together. Some time was spent by the boys in hunting squirrels to bring into camp for their "wives" to cook, while the girls gathered berries, edible roots, and the eggs of turkeys, ducks, quail, and prairie chickens. All this swag made for good make-believe feasts.

The more precocious dallied in sexual experimentation. "One day we played at being married. I did my best to make a baby with my wife," said Post Oak Jim.

When younger boys and girls played together (but not when they were playing camp), there were several forms of joint games.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

787 796 is remembered, but the feather wands and rattles used by the dancers were given to the girl, and then the dancers rushed to the creek to bathe. They dived into the water upstream four times. They then dressed in their best attire and returned to camp to partake of a feast prepared by the women.[20]

The Medicine Dance reported by J. Lee Humfreville was probably a slight variation of the Eagle Dance. Unfortunately Humfreville gave few details, but in those there are only two significant points of difference: the ceremony he witnessed began in the afternoon and ended late in the night, and the dancers carried their medicine bags during the ceremony.[21]

796 224 All attempts to piece together a definite picture of the Buffalo Hunting Dance have been almost futile thus far. One informant was of the opinion that it was the most important communal ceremony. Others were aware of its existence, but remembered none of its ritual or symbolism. Apparently it varied much in form and detail from tribe to tribe. It was rarely held, and only when the camp was in desperate need of buffalo for food or other necessities. It was a band or village affair, under the supervision of a shaman who possessed buffalo medicine. The dance was a prayer to the guardian spirit to direct the buffalo in plentiful numbers to their hunting grounds. Furthermore, the participants danced for power to be successful in the chase. Those going on the hunt could participate. Usually the dance was held in the main camp on the evening before the departure of the hunting party, but if buffalo were scarce, the hunting party sometimes danced after leaving camp. The dancers wore masks made of the whole skin of the buffalo head with the horns left attached.

276 796 Smoking was also associated with power, as has already been demonstrated in the accounts of curing; it was therefore a sacred and ceremonious act. It is true that the Comanches smoked for pleasure, but never casually; and when smoking ceremoniously, it was an oath, a signature to an agreement, a pledge on the part of the smoker, or a prayer for power. In smoking for pleasure, they customarily used

[20] Informant: Yellowfish. Yellowfish danced the Eagle Dance when he was a young man. On another occasion the ceremony was observed by the Reverend John Melville while visiting the Comanche chief, Talaquitnamse, in the Wichita Mountains. Melville's unsatisfactory account of the ceremony is related in Barnes, *op. cit.*, 55–57.

[21] Humfreville, *Twenty Years among Our Savage Indians*, 438.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

622 became demoralized through contact with the white race and the desperate struggle for existence this brought about, the chiefs exercised more authority.[15] Cases of the formal arraignment and
622 trial of a warrior or chief, were exceedingly rare, if such ever
627 occurred; for the writer has never discovered a well authenticated record of such a procedure. A chief or leading brave might lash
[578] a boy or woman, but to strike another brave or chief generally meant a feud or civil war. Differences between tribesmen were settled by those directly concerned or by the relatives of the slain party. Of course, the law of an eye for an eye prevailed, but generally the heart of the offended party could be softened by judicious gifts. Generally the chiefs could make the men behave while they were in their presence and most men followed the admonition of their elders and leaders as a matter of course.

595 Polygamy was common, but before the advent of the white race
684 and its demoralizing influence on the savages the chastity of Comanche women rated high. During the period of Anglo-American relations it was not uncommon for a woman to run away from her husband in company with a spouse more to her liking. Traditional Comanche law provided that in such cases the offended husband might punish the woman by cutting off her nose, but this horrible practice was not always followed. In at least some cases the husband took back his erring spouse and rejoiced in his good fortune at being able to recover her.

221 For sustenance the Comanches depended almost entirely on game,
224 particularly the buffalo. These animals were generally hunted on horseback and brought down with the lance or shot with arrows at close range. Dependable authorities state that at times the Indians would drive the arrows completely through the carcass of the animal.[16] The natural tendency was for the bands to follow the buffaloes in their northward and southward migration, which practice made a sedentary existence impossible. At certain seasons, when the animals were fat, the hunt became a tribal affair and the slaughter of the great beasts took the shape of a cooperative

15. It is Mooney's opinion that the authority of the Kiowa chiefs suffered a sharp decline as a result of the advent of the white race and it is likely that the same thing occurred among the Comanches. See the Kiowa Indian Calendar, as cited, 233.

16. See Marcy, Exploration of Red River, as cited, 98.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

undertaking. Generally the men did the killing while the women dressed the carcasses, loaded the meat on pack animals, took it to camp, and cooked it for immediate use or dried it as the occasion demanded. Some women were also hunters of recognized prowess.[17]

In seasons of plenty the squaws boned and split the meat, carved it into long chains, and threw it over poles to dry in the sun. Meat intended for immediate consumption was dried or cooked over a fire.

Naturally the Comanche women were adepts at tanning hides. The tanning of a deer skin is described thus:

> Having soaked the skins thoroughly, then throw them over a smooth log leaned against a tree at an angle, and then taking a rib of a deer in both hands, remove the hair by scraping it against the grain; they then stretched and dried them, when they became beautifully soft and white. To color them, they tied several into chimney shape, hung to a limb, and building smoulder fires under them they soon changed to a yellowish brown on the hair side, and light yellow on the flesh side.[18]

A somewhat different account is given by another observer. He states that:

> The skins were first staked down to the ground, flesh side up. With a sharp bone the squaw then scraped off every particle of flesh; next the scraped surface was spread with lime to absorb the grease, after which the surface was spread with the brains of the animal, rubbing it in and working it over till the skin became soft and pliable, the process requiring days and days of hard work.[19]

All authorities agree that the Comanches were unexcelled as horsemen. Catlin was amazed at their trick of dropping their body

17. In Notes Taken With Marcy, Parker tells of one woman, the widow of the Penateka chief, Santa Anna, who was said to have killed with her rifle as many as fifteen deer in one forenoon (pp. 192-193). Captain Marcy tells how he observed two young Comanche women of a northern band mount their horses and pursue and lasso each a young antelope which they brought back in triumph to the camp. Exploration of the Red River, 98.

18. Parker, Notes Taken with Marcy, 198-199.

19. Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, Recollections of Old Texas Days, Compiled by his daughter, Nanna Smithwick Donaldson, Austin, Texas (not dated).

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

able sum of money building on the Arkansas a village for a certain band to move into. The Indians moved in, and all went well, until the wife of a prominent chief died and the whole band immediately moved out and sought a new location a great way off. The Spanish officer who reported this unfortunate occurrence explained that these Indians had many superstitions, one being that when any prominent person died the camp should be abandoned and the place henceforth avoided.[25] We have the account of a similar occurrence which happened many years later when the son of chief Pah-hau-ca, of the Southern Comanches, died or was killed and the chief abandoned his camp and chattels and moved far north to a new camp.[26] The Comanches would fight desperately to rescue the body of a fallen comrade so long as the scalp was intact; but the moment this was removed they would abandon the body and would not even touch it to bury it. According to some accounts they also held the heart of an animal in veneration and generally avoided touching it when dressing a carcass.[27]

In literature and art the attainments of the Comanches were slight. They had no system of writing other than that of crude pictures and these commonly pertained to wars and the chase. On skins carefully dressed, they often drew designs, a common one being the sun in the center with different colored rays of light radiating out in finely drawn lines. Their shields were generally adorned with pictures and it may be that they, like their allies the Kiowas, had a system of Heraldry.[28] Their paint was made from colored chalks or clay and their brushes from tufts of hair. For drawings of a more temporary character charcoal often served as the pencil and any smooth surface like bone, a board, or the bark of a tree served for canvas.[29]

They had a system of enumeration, but apparently little or no knowledge of the rudiments of arithmetic. The moon periods served as time units; but it does not seem that they had a calendar of any kind, other than the knowledge of the four seasons. They

25. Ugarte y Loyola to Don Fernando de la Concha, July 22, 1788, enclosing copies of reports made by the officers in New Mexico. Ms. Provincias Internas, Mexico City, Tome 65, University of Texas Transcripts.

26. Statement of Luis Sanches, interpreter, May 1844; Ms. Texas Indian Papers, Texas State Library, Austin.

27. Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, 181.

28. See Mooney, Kiowa Calendar, 230.

29. Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, 180-181; Dr. Ferdinand Roemer, Texas (Bonn, 1849) 293 ff.

10:Horn T-3 (1836-1837) 1955
NO6 Comanche NO6

most abject slavery. It is impossible to conceive of 593
a more absolute despotism, than that under which 562
the wife is held by her husband in these savage
wilds. When they hunt the buffalo, she must carry
his gun, and whatever else is to be carried; when [224]
he shoots the buffalo, it would be infinitely beneath
his dignity to put his hand to it afterwards; she
has it to skin, to cut up the meat, and, whatever be
the distance, or the difficulties in the way, the poor
creature must carry the hide, meat, and all, to the
camp, and if it cannot be done at once, she must
go and return until it is done. At the camp, she has [462]
to do all; to provide the fuel, to fetch the water,
to dress the buffalo skins, to dig the grave, and
bury the dead. Her lordly master will seldom so
much as turn himself, to get a drink of water, or
to get his moccasins, or indeed anything he might
please to want. In all the above, he speaks, and is
instantly obeyed. Never, until I was shut up in the
horrible shades of pagan darkness, where the long
night of Nature holds her iron reign, did I see and
feel the indebtedness particularly of my sex to the
precepts of the gospel of Christ! (Would not the
publication of it to these poor heathen do them
some good? Would not its peaceful and equaliz-
ing precepts, help to raise these poor oppressed
females, could they be brought to bear upon their
cruel husbands?)

In their apparel, they differ little (as I should 291
suppose) from other tribes, unless it be in the

19: Lowie E-5 (1912) 1915 NO6 Comanche NO6

formerly certain "dauntless men," called pía rē'kap ē'kapit (Large Red Buffalo Meat), but these, too, were not associated with a special group. They were expected to act very quietly and practise uncommunicativeness (naĭmeàpalet). One of them, who was killed by the Navajo, had a blue or some other cross painted on his quiver, and carried a singular tomahawk with long blade and eagle feather tied to the handle. There was nothing distinctive about the dress worn by these dauntless men.

In connection with the buffalo hunt there does not seem to have been any police body, and though the tribesmen were warned not to advance ahead of their fellows, the only punishment meted out to offenders was to reprove them. On the other hand, the Big Horse company does seem to have regulated traveling. They had no other political function except to act as guides when the Comanche were on the march and to make peace with other tribes. Wakiní said that the Big Horses numbered about twenty and were always mature men. They had a distinctive song, but never danced by themselves. They painted their bodies red, down to the waist, and tied hawk and sparrowhawk feathers to the back of the head, so that these would flutter as their wearers moved. They carried dewclaw rattles and wore a sash made from a part of the skin of a buffalo taken from its neck.

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

omy.[1] Probably one-third of the Comanches refused to sign the treaty and accept reservation life. But after the failure of the Quaker Peace Policy, the government embarked upon an aggressive military campaign that resulted in the total defeat of the Comanches in the early autumn of 1874.

The Comanches began life on the reservation politically, economically, socially, and spiritually bankrupt. Traditional culture patterns were no longer applicable. The chiefs could no longer maintain control. Without opportunity to hunt and to raid there was no means by which the men could attain social rank and prestige; the social system was frozen. Religious and moral concepts seemed valueless; their medicine had failed them. The buffalo were quickly slaughtered, leaving the Comanches without a source of supplying themselves with food, clothing, shelter, or other necessities.

The Comanches were expected to pass within the span of a single lifetime from the age of stone to that of steam. They were to accept the white man's language, his legal and moral codes, his religion, his food, his clothing. They were to build houses, schools, and churches, to purchase farm equipment and livestock, to improve their allotments, and learn to farm. It was a big assignment. Obviously, considerable capital was necessary for significant progress.

The cultural change was too rapid and too great for simple solution. For some there was no problem; they simply refused to take the white man's road and in an effort to resurrect the past, tried the sun dance, the ghost dance, and peyote—all in vain. A few farsighted individuals had realized from the first that there was no alternative for the white man's road. Reluctantly, the disillusioned began to take it. Favorable economic conditions made the transition easier.

Meanwhile, land hungry "Boomers" made stronger and stronger demands on the government to open the reservation. They argued that the lands were not being used. One

1. Charles J. Kappler (comp.), Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, 57 Cong., 1 sess., Sen. Doc. 452 (3 Vols.; Washington, 1903), II, 977 ff.

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

than any other people whatever. Foppery in all its contemptible gradations, of dress, deportment and mental nothingness and insipidity is the prevailing characteristic of the young men. An Indian Dandy would, to be sure, be an amusing *unique* in the circles of fashion; but if you could transport a full dressed Comanchee buck into a coterie of our most exquisite "Delectables," my word for it, he would eclipse them in all the essential properties of that profession. The squaws from the infancy are too completely servile to bestow either time or solicitude on the ornaments of person. The men are large, and well proportioned and generally, good looking—the women, as much the reverse as human nature will bear. As a nation, they think themselves the most numerous and powerful on earth—and will listen with incredulous wonderment to a recital of facts that controul this flattering opinion.—So true is it that ignorance and vanity are inseparably allied.

The Comanchees do not cultivate the earth, but subsist for the most part on the erratic Buffaloes which descend into their district in the fall, in pursuit of a verdant herbage, and return in the spring, (such of them as survive the depredations of their numerous biped enemies) to their northern range. It has been remarked that the number of Buffaloes that annually reach the regions inhabited by the Comanchees, has sensibly diminished within a few years. In the event of a serious failure of that munificent provision of nature, these and other tribes of similar habits, will be compelled to resort to agriculture, or to recede northwardly in pursuit of their ancient prey. The former of these alternatives would be difficult of adoption, on account of their native inertness and aversion to labor; and the latter would probably be rendered impracticable by the jealousy of other tribes, who already occupy the northern wilds.

These wandering savages have made but small advances in the domestic arts. Their lodges or tents, are formed of Buffaloe hides dressed to a suitable consistency, and erected on poles, in the shape of an elongated cone, having an aperture at the top to emit the smoke, which purpose it answers but very imperfectly. They are exces-

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche N06
Texas

[ca. 1818]

sively uncomfortable in cold or wet weather, and are at best but miserable shelters. The interior furniture consists altogether of the skins of different animals, principally Buffaloe robes, which are spread on the ground, and compose their beds, bedding and all. They use neither chairs, stools, nor tables. In the culinary art they have improved but little upon the most obvious suggestions of nature, and are exceedingly filthy and loathsome in all their household economy. They have no cooking utensils of their own construction, and prefer copper kettles on account of their being easily portable and not subject to fracture. They mostly boil their meat, but sometimes broil it on the coals or roast it on spits. During the summer months they often suffer intensely by hunger, purely from defect of art, and frugality in husbanding their means of subsistence. Whole villages are sometimes three or four days without a particle of animal or vegetables food. Their sufferings are borne in common, and if one hunter is more fortunate than the rest, his game is distributed gratuitously through the whole village. In times of scarcity the men hold it a matter of conscience and pride, to sustain the severest portion of the general privations, and to bear them without murmuring. And indeed they manifest a capacity for enduring abstinence, that would almost lead one to imagine nature had furnished their organic system with a peculiar adaptation to the various contingencies of their existence. When meat is abundant, they gorge and gormandize most voraciously, without experiencing any subsequent inconvenience; and when it is scarce, then endure hunger with singular patience, and comparatively trivial relaxation of the animal functions. Habit is capable of controlling both mind and matter. Being accustomed to pursue their game altogether on horseback, they seldom obtain any other than the Buffaloes, of which they usually have an adequate supply during the cold months, from November to March. They reserve but little from the winter's profusion to supply the scarcity of summer, having no other mode of preventing putrefaction, than by cutting the meat into very thin slices, and exposing it to the sun until it is entirely desicated by exhalation. As you may

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

By J. A. Dacus

Popular author and member of the staff of the St. Louis Republican, 1871-80. Condensed from an article in Ware's Valley Monthly, Volume I, Number 1, St. Louis, May, 1875.

The Comanches: An Ethnological Sketch
(ca 1870)

The Comanches number about fifteen thousand souls. Their former range extended from the sources of the Rio Brazos and Rio Colorado, of Texas, northward to the Canadian, and westward to the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico, and thence southward to the Rio Grande and the Mexican settlements of Nueva Leon and Coahuila. They are generally classed with the great nomadic Apache family. But the points of resemblance, I believe, are not sufficiently distinct to justify the classification. In form, feature, and language they have little likeness or affinity to the Apaches. Their traditions and symbolism and language, all point to a relationship with the Shoshones. The difference in the language spoken by these tribes is only dialectal. The separation must have taken place in the remote past. The cause which led to that separation, it is probable, will never be ascertained.

The name, Comanche, by which the people under consideration are distinguished, is not of their own bestowal. They call themselves *Neum*, which signifies men—the first, or original men. It is probable that their present name is a corruption of the Spanish word comenzar (pronounced comanthar), which signifies "to begin." The Comanches assert that they are THE *men*—the beginning men—or first men. In the effort to impart their distinctive claim, to strangers, they no doubt made use of signs signifying a commencement or beginning, and hence received from the early Spanish adventurers the title, *Los Pueblos Comenzar*: "The people to begin," or the beginning people. It was afterward corrupted to Comanche, instead of Comenzar.

The Comanches are nomads, but not pastoral. They have horses, but keep no cattle, or sheep. They not do cultivate the soil, and confess themselves ignorant of the simplest arts of agriculture. Their food is procured by the chase. The women sometimes collect a few roots and plants, and some of the indigenous fruits of the plains, such as plums, certain kinds of berries, and the fig-like fruits of a species of cactus found on the Wichita

[p. 333]

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

222 [462] [ca 1870]
Mountains. But these collections form a very small part of the food necessary to sustain life.

224 462 The animals killed in the chase are skinned, cut up, and brought to camp by the women, who follow the hunters for that purpose. The whole 262 of the carcass is utilized. The entrails are regarded as appetizing morsels. [263] They rarely use any condiment with their meat. When brought home, the [462] women kindle fires and proceed to partly roast the choice pieces for their lords. The poorest pieces of flesh they may be permitted to reserve for themselves.

411 The Comanches are expert horsemen and skillful archers. The iron-tipped arrow impelled from a Comanche's *bois d'arc* bow, is a dangerous missile. They easily send it through an inch board; and I have seen the rib of an old bullock shattered by one of those arrows.

462 Among them, the women are the most abject slaves. The men do nothing 562 except to follow the chase, go on the war-path, or decorate themselves with feathers and paint. Even this last operation conducive to manly vanity, sometimes falls to the task of the female slaves of the lodge. The slaughtered animals on the plains are brought in by them; the skins are dressed by women, fuel is collected; the herds of ponies are watched; plumes are made, the paint bags are kept in order; the tents or lodges are erected; food is prepared; and, if after performing all these services the Comanche lady finds time heavy on her hands, she is made to minister to the pleasure of her sovereign lord by adorning his buckskin leggings with delicate splotches of paint, and graceful tufts of feather plucked from the prairie eagle; to streak his face with vermillion, yellow ochre, and charcoal, until he appears in all the glory of a full fledged dandy, and then he saunters 562 forth to exhibit his charms to the susceptible maidens of his tribe. The wife, or the daughter, must, at least apparently, be delighted at the magni- 593 ficent "make up" of the dandy husband or father. Theirs is not the privilege to complain.

Among the Comanches, all women occupy the position of slaves. The daughter is the slave to the father; the wife to the husband, and if there are any who do not occupy the relationship of daughter or wife, they are 593 slaves to some male relative, or to the tribe. The father sells his daughter 583 in marriage, and the husband may sell his wife for a pony, a shining piece of silver, or a handful of beads.

562 The women can form no ties, make no bargain, and exercise no choice in social or domestic relations. The father selects a husband for his daugh- 583 ter, exacts a consideration, if she proves agreeable to the chosen son-in-law, and consigns her to him, to do with her as he will. She becomes his slave, 593

23: Cabello y Robles G-3 (1778-1786) 1961
NO6 Comanche NO6
Eastern Comanche

[ca. 1786]

much blindness and harshness, as if they were slaves. 000

SECOND: What Reciprocal Trade Has One Village With Another? 175 438 439

The commerce and trade that one village has with others is that the Eastern Comanche transport the horses which they acquire in their wars and robberies to the villages of the Western Comanche, that are known by the name *Yumbarioas [Yamparikas]*, who are the ones that sell or barter rifles, powder, shot, lances, cloth, pottery, and knives which they acquire from the *Canse, Quita, Quirate and Aguaés*; these are also intermediaries in the commerce of buffalo hides, with and without hair, which they work and dress very well.

THIRD: What Strength Has Each One? 175

With respect to the strength of each settlement it is not possible to ascertain the number of people that compose them, nor of those of the other villages because they are accustomed to subdivide according to the way they accommodate themselves to the terrain in which they exist and the bounty of the hunt of the buffalo, on which they maintain themselves. Because of the shortage of firearms, they keep their strength gathered with the caution with which they always live; they never situate themselves in a place that will be very uncomfortable, but in which they will be able to be sheltered from their enemies, always having little [scouting] parties circling to observe whether or not they are being attacked. They have the system of wandering from one place to another without maintaining themselves in a fixed locale, and in such manner they plant no crops. They maintain themselves only from the flesh of buffalo and deer, and some roots like sweet potatoes that are abundant in the territory in which they travel. 621 224 175 721 621 175 221 [241] [262]

FOURTH: What Territory Do They Ordinarily Occupy? 175

The Rancherias of the Eastern [Comanche] Indians are 131 [133]

24: Richardson H-4 (no date) 1929 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1854-1859) Texas

States Government failed to take into consideration many difficulties peculiar to the Texas Indian situation as well as the inherent characteristics of the plains tribes not found in the Indians of other regions.

Establishing the Reservation

The question of a permanent home for the Indians of Texas was often raised during the decade following annexation; but the problem was difficult to solve, especially since the state maintained that neither the Indians nor the United States had any property rights in the Texas public domain. Under the terms of annexation the state had shifted to the Federal Government the responsibility of managing the Indians but had retained her public lands. Thus, the savages were regarded as tenants at will and in its effort to keep them pacified the United States Indian service had to contend with the steady encroachment of the settlers.

Naturally the misery and poverty of the savages increased from year to year and the problem of restraining them grew proportionately greater. The following words are given as those of Ka-tem-e-see, a Southern Comanche chief:

> Over this vast country, where for centuries our ancesters roamed in undisputed possession, free and happy, what have we left? The game, our main dependence, is killed and driven off, and we are forced into the most sterile and barren portions of it to starve. We see nothing but extermination left us, and we await the result with stolid indifference. Give us a country we can call our own, where we may bury our people in quiet.[2]

East of the Comanches, along the valleys of the upper Brazos and Trinity rivers, were Caddo, Anadarko, Kichai, Haini, Tawakoni and other Indians whose condition was quite as desperate as that of the Comanches. Finally after one or more "location" bills had failed, the Legislature of Texas by an act of February 6, 1854, authorized the Federal Government to select not more than twelve leagues of land to be used for Indian reservations.[3] Captain Ran-

2. Horace Capron, United States Indian Agent in Texas, to Howard, September 30, 1858. Ms., in the University of Texas Library, photostat copies of papers in the United States Indian Office.

3. H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, III, 1485-1494.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

man, if he was fortunate, could become a peace chief, but a peace chief possessed no real authority and functioned most importantly as a mediator in the disputes which arose among the younger men.

With the greater food supply offered by the seemingly boundless bison herds, hunting magic decreased in importance. Antelope magic did persist from the Shoshone heritage. The more favorable living conditions and constant food supply also allowed the individual bands, which had retained their Basin characteristics, to become larger and to achieve a greater degree of independence from their sister bands. The emphasis on the buffalo as a food source also tended to decrease the importance of gathering and exploitation of the floral environment for food. Further, the Comanches made little or no use of fish and of such small game as rabbits (Lowie 1954:6).

The Basin Shoshone practice of infanticide disappeared as the family group could more efficiently care for its offspring. The practice of enculturating slaves and captives became common among the Comanches in order to augment their numbers and specifically to free males for hunting and warfare. The stress on war and hunting also tended to debase the position of women, and such practices as the mutilation of wives, a custom which had never occurred in Basin Shoshone culture, came into practice.

Patterns of religious belief and behavior also underwent certain changes from Basin life to the Plains. A vaguely defined belief in a Great Spirit persisted, as did the relative lack of concern with the afterlife. However, the intense fear of ghosts held by the Basin Shoshone diminished in the Comanche Plains culture. Also, the practice of power transmission from individual to individual, instead of power source to individual, developed in importance. The decrease in ghost fear and, it is assumed, witchcraft in Comanche culture, as opposed to the Basin culture, was greatly facilitated by the lessening of intrasocial tensions and the Comanches' ability, through warfare, to turn aggressions outward and away from the primary group. As a whole, Comanche religious patterns were exceedingly simple and lacking in elaborate ceremonialism and ritual, at least compared to their Plains neighbors (Hoebel 1940:83).

The Comanches possessed characteristics, other than their paucity of ceremonialism, which served to differentiate them from other Plains tribes. The Comanche bands were more self-managing than bands found among other Plains groups. Warrior societies, a diagnostic trait of Plains culture, were lacking in Comanche society except in the most rudimentary form. The Sun Dance was not a vital aspect of Comanche culture. Decoration of clothing with beads, quills, and ornaments of bone, shell, and metal was deemphasized, while heavy fringing of the garments was the rule. The Comanche tepee was built on a four-pole base like that of the Blackfoot, Sarsi, Ute, and Shoshone; while the Comanches' historic neighbors, such as the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa-Apache used a three-pole foundation (Lowie 1954:33).

By the early nineteenth century the bison herds were greatly diminished on the south Plains, and the Comanches increasingly turned to raiding to augment their economy. During this period the Comanches raided New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, northern Texas, and Old Mexico, sometimes as far south as Durango.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
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By the time the settlers moved in, the antelope had disappeared from the Comanche country, as well as the deer and turkey. As early as we arrived, I never saw a turkey. Some of the small black bear held out in the Wichita mountains for a few years. But there was no possible chance for the Indian to live on large game.

Ducks, geese, plover, curlew, snipe, bobwhite, and prairie chickens were plentiful, and West Cache Creek was teeming with channel cat, blue and yellow cat, and perch; yet I never saw an Indian hunting birds or dangling a hook in the water.

Fish-eating, I was to learn later, was almost taboo. Wallace and Hoebel, doing research for their Comanche history, gained the impression that the Comanches ate fish only to keep from actually starving. They had no objection to white people's fishing in their streams. I fished for miles up and down West Cache Creek, and no one ever objected.

I have often thought if I owned a farm West Cache ran through, I would charge people just to look at the creek. To the eye of a boy, there was nothing so beautiful as the blue-green water running over the slightly reddish-tinted granite sand. There was no quicksand on West Cache. Its sand was so sharp you scarcely sank in it when you walked, nor did you rile the water. Here and there were small beaches of clean sand where the swimmer could enter and leave the water. This cool, clear water came from the Wichita Mountains. Strong, vigorous elms along the high banks furnished shade for the swimmer or fisherman. More than sixty years later, I still feel it was the most beautiful prairie stream I have ever seen.

Too young in those days to realize the cause, I couldn't help but sense the terrible separateness between my Carlisle group and the older men and women. Later I was to realize that government educators of the late nineteenth century, in carrying out their theory of educating young Indians, violated the unwritten bedrock commandment of human behavior: "Thou shalt not speak ill of any man in the presence of his offspring." You must not cut away the support from beneath his feet. You may be able to furnish him another platform, on which he may see fit to step; but he can never step onto your platform if you have first destroyed his footing.

Even the Comanche children's language became taboo at Carlisle. After drilling into the children's minds what terrible people their par-

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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camp functioning properly. The tasks were varied and time-consuming, and no one woman could have taken care of all of them.

The warrior-husband was the killer of game, the procurer of buffalo meat, the Comanches' principal source of food. He had to have two sets of trained horses—one trained for war, the other for the killing of buffalo. In either pursuit, his life was largely dependent on the horse. He manufactured both his riding gear and his weapons, and he trained his own horses. His fighting was practically on a twelve-month basis, since, though the Comanches did not like winter fighting, most of the ambitious warriors made raiding expeditions into Old Mexico when the group went into winter camp.

The husband, therefore, could be of little or no help around the camp, and the labor had to be divided among the women. Usually one of the women was an expert horsewoman and had the responsibility of her husband's horse herd, which often numbered a hundred or more. When the fall hunt was on for the winter's supply of meat, the wives did the skinning and butchering. They dried the meat and made the pemmican. Also, they prepared and tanned the hides. After the tanning came the making of clothing. This included everything the family wore, both in summer and winter. Since there was neither needle nor thread, the holes in the leather were made with a stone awl or one made from bone, and sinew taken from along the backbone of a buffalo or deer was used for thread.

Other hides were converted into robes for bedding or into covers for the tepees. When camp was moved, tepees had to be taken down and fastened on travoises, like all the other camp gear, and then camp must be set up again at the new location. All of this was strictly woman's work.

Somewhere, sometime, during breathing spells from all these duties, the women bore babies, nursed them, and raised them to be good Comanches. And all this was in a society without a recognized medium of exchange, in which no one could hire anything done. The Comanches did, however, utilize slave labor. Successful warriors furnished captive women to their wives for helpers. These captive women were given the opportunity to trade their slave status for wifehood, and captive girls were carefully trained to become Comanche wives. Captive boys were trained as warriors to fill the vacancies in the warrior ranks. In addition to members of other tribes, Anglos, Spaniards, and Mexicans were abducted to be made slaves.

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157 Ca-vo-yo, who was one of the first of the old chaps to become an individual to me, was such a friendly, kindly old fellow that it was hard for me to picture him riding into battle, screaming his war cry. But by the agency's record he must have been a successful and respected warrior for approximately twenty years. Had he not been a successful warrior, none would have sought him out to name their man-child and give of his medicine.

778 I have tried a number of times to write Ca-vo-yo's story as a giver of names, but the trouble always is that scarcely have you begun to write about the giving of a name, when you run into *Pa-haw-cut*, the Comanche name for medicine. And it is hard to tell a white audience about Comanche medicine, because the white man has nothing through which he can identify with the Comanche's feeling about it. I thought at one time of creating a straw man by combining an individual who by faith had a guardian angel with one who believed his destiny was directed by the stars and their positions, and then to this composite individual adding one who believed in luck—one who would not leave his home for the office of a morning without his good luck charm. Then I decided that the faith of even such an individual would still fall far short of a Comanche's faith in his medicine.

When a Comanche warrior was bragging, to an audience gathered around a campfire, of some mighty coup he had brought about, he was not bragging of a personal exploit—he was telling about the 701 strength of his medicine. From the earliest war games he played as a boy, throughout his active adult life, he was constantly training himself to be ever a better warrior. It was his way of life. Also, he sought to perfect himself in the making of arms, both for war and for the hunt. Each warrior furnished his own arms. We have a written history, more or less, for the last 175 years of Comanche warfare, which shows that the Comanche possessed neither an armory nor a commissary.

Just as he had one set of arrows for war and another set of arrows he used in the killing of the buffalo, so the Comanche had horses trained for war and horses trained to carry him alongside the buffalo, so he could loose an arrow into the rib cage of his huge quarry. But it was his individual *Pa-haw-cut*, or medicine, that allowed him to count coup early and often in the battle—that caused his horse to carry him at full speed into battle and to carry him away in a strategic retreat. The same medicine allowed his horse to place him beside

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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the stampeding buffalo without stepping into a grass-covered badger or prairie-dog hole.

It was his medicine that enabled him to crawl into a cavalry bivouac and sever the eight-foot rope that each soldier had tied to his wrist, so his horse might graze safely during the night, and without waking the sleeper or his comrades lead the horse away.

It was his medicine that caused his wives to be friendly and congenial, one with the other. It resulted in the wives' caring for his camp, looking after his surplus horses, and bearing mostly boy babies. For none of these things did he take credit personally. But he was justly proud of his medicine that had brought all these things about, and he guarded it like a jealous lover.

To sum up the attributes of a name-giver: he needed a keen ear and an extensive knowledge of the vocabulary—perhaps a sense of humor helped—and he must have a successful reputation as a warrior-hunter and a willingness to share his medicine. Custom required him to give each individual named a supply of his medicine. Warriors often refused to give a name because it meant parting with a portion of their medicine. They feared the remainder might prove inadequate. Apparently the true name-giver's supply had a similarity to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel of the widow at Zarepath, while she fed the fugitive Elijah. It was replenished as used.

My reading indicates that the Comanche placed more emphasis or dependence on the name than did any of the other Plains tribes. A warrior might carry a number of names, should he live a long and successful life. In the event a boy developed into a sickly youngster, or was accident-prone, his parents were apt to seek out one reputed to have even stronger medicine than the one who gave him the first name and ask for another name. Directly after puberty when a youth went alone to fast and pray for a vision, should his vision have particular significance, he would be given a name in keeping with the vision. But no Comanche dared name himself.

After his acceptance as a warrior, should he develop outstanding characteristics in methods, strategy, or bravery, he might be given yet another name, descriptive of his accomplishments. For example, there was the Mexican captive Mo-cho-rook, about whom I tell in another chapter. Raised and trained as a Comanche warrior, he was given this name because "he so cruel, he makes Comanche blood run cold." He became a legend while yet he lived.

221
224 **The Comanche were nomad buffalo**
hunters, constantly on the move, cultivating little from the ground, and living
181 in skin tipis. They were long noted as the
finest horsemen of the plains and bore a
(186) reputation for dash and courage. They
have a high sense of honor and hold
themselves superior to the other tribes
142 with which they are associated. In per-
son they are well built and rather corpu-
197 lent. Their language is the trade lan-
guage of the region and is more or less
understood by all the neighboring tribes.
[194] It is sonorous and flowing, its chief char-
acteristic being a rolling r. The lan-
guage has several dialects.

614 The gentile system seems to be unknown
among the Comanche. They have, or still
101 remember, 12 recognized divisions or bands
621 and may have had others in former times.
Of these all but 5 are practically extinct.
The Kwahari and Penateka are the most
[115] important. Following, in alphabetic or-
der, is the complete list as given by their
leading chiefs: Detsanayuka or Nokoni;
Ditsakana, Widyu, Yapa, or Yamparika;
Kewatsana; Kotsai; Kotsotcka; Kwahari
or Kwahadi; Motsai; Pagatsu; Penateka
or Penande; Pohoi (adopted Shoshoni);
Tanima; Tenawa or Tenahwit; Waaih.
101 In addition to these the following have
also been mentioned by writers as divi-
sions of the Comanche: Guagejohe, Mu-
vinabore, Nauniem, Parkeenaum. See
Dotame. (J. M.)

Alleboms.—Lewis and Clark, Discov., 89, 1806 (so called by the French; see *Ne'-mo-sin*, below). **Bald Heads.**—Long, Exped. Rocky Mts., I, 155, 1823. **Bo'dálk'ínago.**—Mooney in 14th Rep. B. A. E., 1043, 1896 (Kiowa name: 'reptile people', 'snake men'). **Cadoues.**—Domenech, Deserts N. Am., II, 100, 1860 (misprint of Padouca). **Camanchs.**—Pike, Trav., xiv, 214, note, 1811. **Camanchees.**—Pilcher in Sen. Doc. 198, 25th Cong., 2d sess., 23, 1838. **Camarsches.**—Morse, Rep. to Sec. War, 367, 1822. **Ca'-tha.**—Hayden, Ethnog. and Philol. Mo. Val., 326, 1862 ('having many horses': Arapaho name). **Caumuchas.**—La Harpe (1719) in Margry, Déc., VI, 289, 1886. **Caunouche.**—Beaurain, ibid. **Caw-mainah.**—Gebow, Shoshonay Vocab., 8, 1868 (Shoshoni name). **Cemanlos.**—Escalante (1776) misquoted by Harry in Simpson, Explor. across Utah, 495, 1876. **Cintu-aluka.**—Corliss, Dacotah MS. vocab., B. A. E., 106, 1874 (Teton name). **Comances.**—Schoolcraft, Pers. Mem., 620, 1851. **Comancha.**—Barreiro, Ojeada, app., 9, 1832. **Comanchees.**—Abert in Emory, Recon., 470, 1848. **Comanchero.**—Gregg, Comm. Prairies, II, 56, 1844 (Spanish form). **Comanches.**—Sanchez (1757) in Doc. Hist. Mex., 4th s., I, 88, 1856. **Comanchos.**—Taylor in Cal. Farmer, Apr. 10, 1863. **Comandes.**—Maximilian, Trav., 510, 1843. **Comandus.**—Alegre, Hist. Comp. Jesus, I, 336, 1841. **Comanshima.**—Bourke, Moquis of Ariz., 118, 1884 (Hopi name). **Comantz.**—Gregg, Comm. Prairies, II, 24, 1844 (Comanche pronunciation). **Comauch.**—Morse, Rep. to Sec. War, 374, 1822 (misprint). **Cumancho.**—Doc. of 1720 quoted by Bandelier in Arch. Inst. Pap., V, 183, 1890. **Cumanias.**—Long, Exped. to Rocky Mts., I, 478, 1823. **Cumeches.**—Schermerhorn in Mass. Hist. Coll., II, 29, 1812. **Dä'tsä-a².**—Gatschet, MS., B. A. E. (Kiowa Apache name). **Gyai'-ko.**—Mooney in 14th Rep. B. A. E., 1043, 1896 ('enemies': Kiowa name). **Idahi.**—Ibid. (Kiowa Apache name). **Indé.**—Hodge, field notes, B. A. E., 1895 (Jicarilla name).

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